

SITUATION REPORT NO. 18
INCIDENT NO. 97-003
DATE: January 30, 1997 TIME: 1:00 p.m.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Winter storms and blizzard conditions statewide.
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: A McHenry County youth suffered a serious case of frostbite after he abandoned his vehicle when it became stuck in a snow drift. He was trying to walk 1 ½ miles to a farm when he was found.
3. DAMAGES: A National Weather Service report indicates snow depths in North Dakota are highest in the eastern and south central quadrants of the state. The greatest depths reach 30 inches in this area. However, officials recorded 34 inches in a small area of northern McHenry County. Also, snow depths in a small area in Mountrail County reached as high as 25 inches.

In Logan County, freezing temperatures caused water lines to break in the cities of Napoleon and Lehr. The line break in Lehr threatens to undermine N.D. Highway 30, the Dakota-Missouri-Valley-Western Railroad track and a grain elevator. Service has been discontinued, and residents have been without water since 4 p.m. January 28. A repair crew has been trying to find where the break occurred. Meanwhile, traffic on N.D. Highway 30 is being rerouted onto city streets. In Napoleon, the water break on N.D. Highway 30 was repaired during the evening of January 28.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: Since January 10, Salvation Army has delivered 87 cases of meat donated by the Super Valu Warehouse to a food pantry in Fort Yates, Standing Rock Indian Reservation.
6. MAJOR ACTIONS: At present, 1,685 pieces of equipment are required to respond to snow removal efforts throughout North Dakota. Equipment in use includes dozers, graders, v-plow trucks, blowers and loaders. Sources of equipment include North Dakota counties, contractors, N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT), N.D. National Guard, the Grand Forks Air Force Base and the Minot Air Force Base.

The N.D. DOT crews report that efforts to push back snow on state highways are progressing well. The agency anticipates work may be completed within two weeks, pending weather conditions. Road crews are concentrating efforts on clearing snow from medians on four-lane roadways and assisting county snow removal efforts. In Foster County, a N.D. DOT snow blower crew cleared a roadway to gain emergency access for an elderly couple.

The N.D. National Guard completed five snow removal missions on January 29, and reassigned equipment to other priority missions. The National Guard will concentrate efforts in Grant, Pembina, Nelson, Dickey, Ransom, Steele, Ramsey and Richland Counties. Presently, there are 36 completed missions, 25 in progress and 11 pending missions. The National Guard is also monitoring three N.D. DOT missions. Total staffing for the three N.D. DOT and 25 National Guard missions numbers 116 personnel and includes: 72 Army Guard, 21 Air Guard, 18 Air Force and five N.D. DOT personnel. Crew members are operating 27 dozers, 14 snow blowers, 22 tractor-trailers, 20 support vehicles, seven dump trucks, six loaders and one grader.

Road crews continue to make inroads on county snow removal efforts. Statewide, 80 percent of roads have been cleared for emergency two-way access while snow removal crews report an average of 48 percent push back of snow. The 12 northwest counties and the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation average nearly 96 percent emergency access and an 80 percent average for push back of snow. The southwest zone, which includes 14 counties and the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, average 87 percent access and 75 percent push back of snow. In the northeast quadrant, 14 counties and the Turtle Mountain and Spirit Lake Indian Reservations average nearly 72 percent access and nearly 24 percent push back of snow. In the southeastern quadrant, the hardest hit area, 12 counties average nearly 68 percent access and nearly 21 percent push back.

Snow removal efforts have been completed in 13 counties to include: Adams, Bowman, Slope, Stark, Golden Valley, Billings, McKenzie, Williams, Divide, Burke, Renville, Bottineau and Rolette.

Since the storms began, McHenry County officials, state employees and local residents have participated in four rescue missions. In the first rescue, a teenager had left his vehicle after it became stuck in a snow drift and was trying to walk 1 ½ miles to a farm. A farmer found the teenager after a three-hour search. He was hospitalized for a severe case of frostbite. In a separate incident, a second youth's vehicle became stuck in a snow drift and a county plow was used to clear roads. This youth also was attempting to walk to a nearby farm when he was located. In a third incident, a county road crew plowed a road so that a heart attack victim could be transported by ambulance to a Minot hospital. Snow plow resources were tapped again when a N.D. DOT plow cleared a path so that a farmer could take his ailing neighbor to a hospital.

The Individual Assistance Officer for the N.D. Division of Emergency Management provided an update on efforts to address the winter storm disaster, FEMA-1157-DR-ND (State Incident 97-003), during a meeting of Volunteers Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) on January 29.

The cities of Ashley and Turtle Lake have issued Disaster Declarations. Since the winter storms began, 52 counties, 56 cities and three Indian Reservations have issued Emergency or Disaster Declarations.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The forecast for January 30 calls for temperatures of 30 to 45 above for western and central North Dakota 20s to upper 30s for the eastern portion of the state. There is a 30 percent chance of light rain in northwest. Westerly winds will range from 10 to 20 miles per hour (mph).

The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports and photos of snow removal efforts are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>".

Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director